

REMARKS

Claims 1-7 are all the claims pending in the application.

Initially, the Examiner is respectfully requested to acknowledge Applicants' claim to priority under 35 U.S.C. §119, and confirm receipt of the priority document.

I. Response to Rejection of Claims 1-7 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 1-7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by JP-2002- 018248 ("JP '248").

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

The present invention according to claim 1 is a spiral separation membrane element comprising a perforated core tube and, wound there around, one or more separation membranes, one or more feed-side passage materials, and one or more permeation-side passage materials. The permeation-side passage materials each have warps extending almost parallel with the direction of flow of a permeated liquid and wefts fixed to the warps, a ratio of the pitch (width of each warp + distance between the opposed sides of adjacent warps) to a distance between the opposed sides of adjacent warps is 1.1/1 to 3/1, and a ratio of a thickness of the passage material to a distance between the opposed sides of adjacent warps is 0.25/1 to 1.25/1.

JP '248 relates to an apparatus having a spiral type-gas-liquid contact membrane element 10 and a groove-construction spacer 50 wrapping the outer periphery of the element 10. *See e.g., Abstract and Fig. 5.* The Examiner appears to reject the claims based on the diameter and the distance of the warps 51 and wefts 52, which constitute the groove-construction spacer 50. However, the groove-construction space 50 is a different member from

the permeation-side passage material of claim 1.

Specifically, the groove-construction spacer 50 is wound around the outside of the element 10, and is not located at the position of the permeation-side passage material of claim 1. Furthermore, the gas-side flow channel material 15 of JP '248 seems to be located at the position corresponding to the permeation-side passage material of claim 1. *See* partial translation of JP '248 submitted herewith, and [0042]. Therefore, the groove-construction spacer 50 of JP '248 does not correspond to the permeation-side passage material of claim 1. Moreover, it is submitted that one of ordinary skill in the art would understand the position and the function of the permeation-side passage material of claim 1 in view of the description in the present specification as clearly different from any embodiment in JP '248.

For the above reasons, it is respectfully submitted that JP '248 does not anticipate claims 1-7. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

II. Response to Rejection of Claims 1 and 3-5 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 1 and 3-5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Janneck (US 4,022,692).

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Janneck relates to a device where an inner core is wrapped with a non-woven support screen 10 and a flat semi-permeable tubular membrane 12. *See* Fig. 1 and col. 2, lines 58-62. The Examiner appears to reject the claims based on the diameter and the distance of the filaments 18, 20, which constitute the non-woven support screen 10. However, the non-woven support screen 10 is a different member from the permeation-side passage material of claim 1.

Specifically, in Janneck, the support 10 and the membrane 12 are wound with the

membrane 12 on the inside of the support 10 so that membrane 12 forms the first interior layer of the coil and the support 10 ultimately form the exterior layer of the coil. *See* col. 3, lines 5-8. Thus, the non-woven support screen of Janneck does not correspond to the permeation-side passage material of claim 1.

For the above reasons, it is respectfully submitted that Janneck does not anticipate claims 1 and 3-5. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

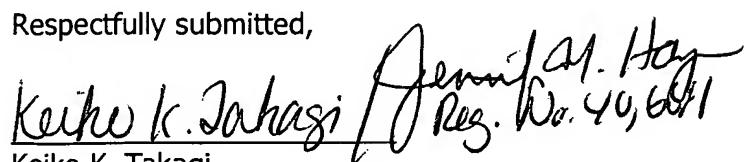
III. Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-7 is respectfully requested.

If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,


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Date: September 18, 2006